

Dear Graduate Students:

I am writing to you because we have reached a critical point in contract negotiations with the United Autoworkers Union (“UAW”) which represents stipended graduate Teaching Assistants and Research Assistants, as well as hourly graduate students performing teaching or research services on the Boston, Burlington, and Nahant campuses. You are receiving this communication because you are part of this unionized group of students at Northeastern.

What are union contract negotiations?

Parties in union negotiations negotiate in good faith to try and reach an agreement, which is not always possible. Northeastern has been engaging and negotiating with the UAW in good faith for over 17 months over terms of a union contract that will apply to you. Contract terms typically include issues that have always applied to funded graduate students at Northeastern, such as annual stipend increases, health insurance and paid parental leave.

What has happened in negotiations?

The University proposed an economic package offer on November 18, 2024, that provides fully covered dental insurance and dependent healthcare coverage for children of PhD students, establishes a minimum \$43,000 stipend with guaranteed minimum annual increases of 2.5%, and provides student EAP benefits for PhD and hourly Master’s students that offers many resources, including free access to legal advice. The University has also proposed expanded protections for Health and Safety, Discrimination and Harassment, and Workload, as well as enhanced benefits for Leaves of Absence, Vacation, Sick Time, Holidays and Personal Time. The University also reconfigured the Concur system to allow graduate students an easier path for reimbursements.

Why is a final package being offered?

On April 11, 2025, the University reviewed its current comprehensive package offer with the UAW and the Union rejected it without discussion, claiming it fails to represent what graduate students would accept. The University asked the UAW during this meeting whether it would present this package offer to Union members and allow you to vote on whether to accept the offer, but the Union refused that suggestion.

The University has communicated to the Union today that its package offer is final, and will be available for 30 days, expiring on June 5, 2025. If the final package offer is not accepted by then, the University may amend the terms in light of the new financial landscape that is impacting research universities like Northeastern.

I encourage you to view our bargaining update website where you can view a copy of the University final package offer and read more about the negotiations: [Graduate Student Union Negotiations – Northeastern Provost](#).

There is much for graduate students to celebrate in the University's offer, both in economic and healthcare guarantees, and the many protections embedded in over two dozen separate contract articles. We hope the UAW recognizes this opportunity before the offer expires. If you have questions, you may email gradunioninfo@northeastern.edu.

Regards,

David Madigan
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs